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Mold and Mildew Growth: Planning and Prevention

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Mold and mildew can grow on many different types of objects, including but not limited to building materials, if such objects are exposed to moisture and other proper conditions. If building materials get wet and are stored or installed with conditions of warm temperatures, high humidity, an oxygen supply and varying degrees of light, an environment exists that can support mold and mildew growth.

Planning and prevention is the most effective way to avert the growth of mold or mildew. Gypsum board should be delivered to projects as near to the time it will be used as possible. Board delivered to a job site must be placed under cover immediately, properly protected and not exposed to outside elements such as rain, snow or other high moisture conditions.

If building materials get wet from any moisture source, that source must first be identified and corrected. If mold or mildew growth occurs, or if you suspect it might occur due to environmental conditions and moisture, a determination must be made to either attempt to dry and clean the affected areas or to replace the affected materials. Care must be taken in this evaluation, and if you do not have the training or experience to recognize and to make proper decisions about repair or removal, you should consult a professional.

Once the source of moisture and the conditions for mold or mildew growth have been removed, it may be possible to remove surface mold and mildew. Some of the resources listed below provide advice on cleaning techniques. Keep in mind, though, that once the area has become wet and the supporting conditions for mold or mildew are present, growth can occur in hidden areas. If you are unsure about whether surface cleaning will remove all mold and mildew, you may decide to remove and replace all the water-damaged materials. If replacing those materials, be careful to clean and dry out those affected areas before applying new products. Remember that you should obtain the on-site advice and assistance of a professional, if you are not sure of the appropriate course of action.

In severe or prolonged moisture situations, coupled with other conditions which support the growth of mold or mildew, or where extensive mold or mildew growth is already apparent, the best method of dealing with this problem may be to replace the affected materials, after taking the necessary steps to eliminate the moisture source and as many of the other growth-supporting conditions as you can. Again, you will have to make that decision, with on-site professional advice as appropriate.

National Gypsum Company Does Not Offer Job Site Inspection Or Mold Testing Services.

If you would like more information about mold and mildew and the methods of remediation, contact one or all of the following websites:

Gypsum Association Guidelines for Prevention of Mold Growth on Gypsum Board at <http://www.gypsum.org/pdf/GA-238-03.pdf>

Environmental Protection Agency at <http://www.epa.gov/>

Centers for Disease Control at <http://www.cdc.gov/>